

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior version, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (previously presented): A method for pricing a cryptographic service on a network utilizing one or more cryptoservers, comprising:

- 1
- (a) receiving a request for the cryptographic service from a user utilizing the network, wherein the request is received by a cryptographic service provider;
 - (b) generating a contract based on a variable pricing scheme in response to the request;
 - (c) sending the contract from the cryptographic service provider to the user utilizing the network;
 - (d) receiving, by the cryptographic service provider, information from the user; and
 - (e) applying the cryptographic service to the information using the one or more cryptoservers to satisfy the contract.

Claim 2 (previously presented): The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the cryptographic service provider selects one of the one or more cryptoservers to perform the cryptographic service.

Claim 3 (previously presented): The method as recited in claim 2, wherein the cryptographic service provider is a commercial service competing for customers.

Claim 4 (previously presented): The method as recited in claim 2, wherein the one or more cryptoservers is part of a single distributed service.

Claim 5 (previously presented): The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the variable pricing scheme is based on at least one of a data load of the one or more cryptoservers during performance of the cryptographic service, a distance between the one or more cryptoservers and the user, a congestion of the network during performance of the cryptographic service, and a rating of the one or more cryptoservers performing the cryptographic service.

Claim 6 (original): The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the variable pricing scheme is auction-based.

Claim 7 (original): The method as recited in claim 6, wherein the cryptographic service provider receives bids for performing the cryptographic service from the user.

Claim 8 (previously presented): The method as recited in claim 6, wherein the one or more cryptoservers bid for providing the cryptographic service.

Claim 9 (previously presented): The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the cryptographic service provider is one of the one or more cryptoservers.

Claim 10 (previously presented): The method as recited in claim 3, wherein the cryptographic service provider provides a receipt upon performing the cryptographic service, wherein the receipt includes at least one of a one-way hash of the results of its computations, the time and duration of the computations, a description of the computations, and the identities of the one or more cryptoservers and the customer.

Claim 11 (previously presented): A computer program embodied on a computer readable medium for pricing a cryptographic service on a network utilizing one or more cryptoservers, comprising:

- (a) a code segment that receives a request for the cryptographic service from a user utilizing the network, wherein the request is received by a cryptographic service provider;

- (b) a code segment that generates a contract based on a variable pricing scheme in response to the request;
- (c) a code segment that sends the contract from the cryptographic service provider to the user utilizing the network;
- (d) a code segment that receives, by the cryptographic service provider, information from the user; and
- (e) a code segment that applies the cryptographic service to the information using the one or more cryptoservers to satisfy the contract.

Claim 12 (previously presented): The computer program as recited in claim 11, wherein the cryptographic service provider selects one of the one or more cryptoservers to perform the cryptographic service.

Claim 13 (previously presented): The computer program as recited in claim 11, wherein the variable pricing scheme is based on at least one of a data load of the one or more cryptoservers during performance of the cryptographic service, a distance between the one or more cryptoservers and the user, a congestion of the network during performance of the cryptographic service, and a rating of the one or more cryptoservers performing the cryptographic service.

Claim 14 (original): The computer program as recited in claim 11, wherein the variable pricing scheme is auction-based.

Claim 15 (previously presented): A system for pricing a cryptographic service comprising:

- (a) a network;
- (b) one or more cryptoservers for providing a cryptographic service;

- (c) logic that receives a request for the cryptographic service from a user utilizing the network, wherein the request is received by a cryptographic service provider;
- (d) logic that generates a contract based on a variable pricing scheme in response to the request;
- (e) logic that sends the contract from the cryptographic service provider to the user utilizing the network;
- (f) logic that receives, by the cryptographic service provider, information from the user; and
- (g) logic that applies the cryptographic service to the information using the one or more cryptoservers to satisfy the contract.

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Claim 16 (previously presented): The system as recited in claim 15, wherein the cryptographic service provider selects one of the one or more cryptoservers to perform the cryptographic service.

Claim 17 (previously presented): The system as recited in claim 16, wherein the cryptographic service provider is a commercial service competing for customers.

Claim 18 (previously presented): The system as recited in claim 16, wherein the one or more cryptoservers is part of a single distributed service.

Claim 19 (previously presented): The system as recited in claim 15, wherein the variable pricing scheme is based on at least one of a data load of the one or more cryptoservers during performance of the cryptographic service, a distance between the one or more cryptoservers and the user, a congestion of the network during performance of the cryptographic service, and a rating of the one or more cryptoservers performing the cryptographic service.

Claim 20 (original): The system as recited in claim 15, wherein the variable pricing scheme is auction-based.

Claim 21 (original): The system as recited in claim 19, wherein the cryptographic service provider receives bids for performing the cryptographic service from the user.

Claim 22 (previously presented): The system as recited in claim 19, wherein the one or more cryptoservers bid for providing the cryptographic service.

Claim 23 (previously presented): The system as recited in claim 15, wherein the cryptographic service provider is one of the one or more cryptoservers.

Claim 24 (previously presented): The system as recited in claim 20, wherein the auction-based variable pricing scheme is conducted securely as a cryptographic protocol by some of the one or more cryptoservers.
